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Marcel C. Acosta

IN REPLY REFER TO:
NCPC File No. 7532

November 6, 2013

Mr. David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer
Historic Preservation Office
District of Columbia Office of Planning
1100 4th St SW
Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Initiation of Section 106 Consultation, Redevelopment of the Carnegie Library
Building at Mount Vernon Square

Dear Mr. Maloney:

Events DC, on behalf of the District of Columbia, and in partnership with the Spy Museum is proposing to renovate and expand the Carnegie Library building and rehabilitate the public space of Mount Vernon Square. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is writing to initiate consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. §470f) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800). The proposed project is subject to the review and approval of NCPC under the National Capital Planning Act and NCPC's approval is considered an undertaking.

As proposed, the project would be co-developed by Events DC and the Spy Museum as a public/private partnership. The project proposes to renovate and expand the Carnegie Library building in order to incorporate a new, state of the art visitor center for the District of Columbia; provide enhanced quarters for the Historical Society of Washington, DC; provide museum exhibit space to accommodate the relocation of the International Spy Museum to the Carnegie Library; add retail and café space; and improve the open space and circulation patterns of Mount Vernon Square. An addition along the north side of the building is proposed that would insert flexible exhibit and storage spaces underground (41,000 square feet), and a pavilion (17,000 square feet) on the ground level. This project is intended to enhance Mount Vernon Square as a major destination by rehabilitating the historic Carnegie Library building.

The purpose of the project is to renovate the Carnegie Library building as a visitor attraction, provide additional space for museum and cultural attractions, and enliven the public space of Mount Vernon Square. The proposed project would establish a new

destination at Mount Vernon Square and augment the experience of visitors to Washington by offering additional visitor orientation, cultural exhibit space, and public venues. In addition, the proposed action would provide outdoor amenities for the surrounding neighborhood through physical improvements to Mount Vernon Square. When the project is complete, Events DC will continue to maintain and operate the Carnegie Library and Mount Vernon Square, and the Spy Museum will be a key tenant of the building. The Maltz Family, founders and owners of the Spy Museum, has committed to gifting the museum to the community as a 501(C)(3) nonprofit in conjunction with seeking a permanent home for the museum.

Conceptual studies of the proposed project are included in this package to provide preliminary information. In addition, attached please find a list of consulting parties and a graphic illustration of the proposed area of potential effects (APE). These items are intended as a basis of discussion and are subject to modification as part of the consultation process. The proposed APE for this project includes the area from which the project site is readily visible. A preliminary list of historic resources within the APE includes the Central Public Library (Carnegie Library), the L'Enfant and McMillan Plan (Plan for the City of Washington), the Samuel Gompers Memorial, the Carpenters Building, Tudor Hall (the Henley Park Hotel), Mount Vernon Methodist Church, the American Federation of Labor, the 1000 block of Seventh Street, NW, Washington Hebrew Congregation (Greater New Hope Baptist Church), the National Portrait Gallery and National Museum of America Art (the Old Patent Office), Shaw Historic District, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District, Downtown Historic District, and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site. In addition, the APE encompasses 1009-1017 K Street NW, which is currently under consideration for status as a District of Columbia Landmark. These sites have been extensively documented; therefore, additional survey requirements on potentially affected historic resources are not anticipated.

At this time, NCPC has determined that the project has the potential to have an adverse effect on Mount Vernon Square, a contributing feature of the Plan for the City of Washington and the Carnegie Library building. The Carnegie Library, a three-story building designed in the Beaux Arts Classical style by Ackerman and Ross, was gifted to the District by Andrew Carnegie in 1903. The Carnegie Library was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969, and the building and site are designated local landmarks. The proposed project design seeks to respect both the framework of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans for Mount Vernon Square and the Beaux Arts design principles of the Carnegie Library to preserve views and vistas of the Carnegie Library, as well as L'Enfant vistas that include the 8th Street pedestrian corridor to the Old Patent Office Building. A geotechnical survey is currently in preparation, but previous work at the adjacent Washington Convention Center indicates that fill material could be present to a depth of approximately ten feet. As a result, a Phase 1A archaeological study will be conducted in consultation with the DC SHPO. Through the Section 106 consultation process, NCPC looks forward to working with the DC SHPO and other consulting parties

to finalize a formal determination of effect. NCPC is prepared to work with the DC SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other consulting parties to identify and evaluate modifications to the proposed project that will avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects on historic properties within the APE.

NCPC, in cooperation with Events DC and the Spy Museum, is preparing an Environmental Assessment to analyze potential impacts associated with the project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCPC plans to coordinate the Section 106 process with NEPA per the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800.8). A public scoping meeting will be held on November 20, 2013 from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm in the Theodore Roosevelt Room at the Carnegie Library, located at 801 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20001. This public scoping meeting will include an introduction to the Section 106 consultation process.

We look forward to working with you on the Section 106 consultation for this project. Please contact Jennifer Hirsch at 202-482-7239 or via email at jennifer.hirsch@ncpc.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcel Acosta', with a stylized, flowing script.

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

Enclosures

cc: Reid Nelson, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation